

***Risk Pool Program Grant Funds  
for Students with Disabilities***

***Procedures and Instructions***

**Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

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## **Procedures and Instructions for Risk Pool Program Grant Funds**

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## Procedures for Requesting and Reverting Risk Pool Program Funds

Risk Pool Program Grant Funds (RPF) for children with disabilities, ages three (3) to 21, are not intended to replace any existing state, federal or local exceptional children funds.

Beginning October 21, 2019, the MS Word fillable applications must be emailed as a password protected document to the [SpecialGrants@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:SpecialGrants@dpi.nc.gov) email address. Applications sent postal mail will not be accepted for the 2019-2020 school year. EC Division personnel will review applicant students' supporting documentation in ECATS. Other supporting documentation such as invoices/receipts for equipment purchases, health care plan, etc. are also to be emailed as per directions in this manual. If additional information is needed, the PSU EC Director/Coordinator will be contacted.

### Password Protected Email Instructions

- If compatible encryption is not available to both parties, data should be password protected. The password should be given to the recipient through a different medium, such as a phone call. Never provide the password in notes or documents accompanying the actual data file, or another email. Additionally, the password should not be transferred via voicemail.
- When protecting the document with a password, go to File>Info>protect document, in the dropdown. Select Encrypt with password. A box will populate for you to enter a password (passwords are case sensitive).
- Once the document is password protected, save the document as PSU#\_PSUName\_type of document (i.e. application, update form, etc.) and then email it to [specialgrants@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:specialgrants@dpi.nc.gov)

Applications **must be submitted no later than September 30<sup>th</sup>**, and cannot be submitted until after a student's first day of attendance for the current school year. The emailed application provides the EC Division with a date and time stamp of the applications submitted.

The application and update form include signature fields for the EC Director/Coordinator, Finance Officer and Superintendent. Obtain all signatures prior to emailing.

**Basis of Application Approval:** Risk Pool Funds are available for a student who was **enrolled in the PSU during the previous year** and meets all the following criteria:

- For 2019-2020, the most current data available is from the data used for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Therefore, the figures will remain unchanged for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.
  - Dollars per average daily membership (ADM) State average of \$6,254.78 and State funded child count amount of \$4,464.16 are used to determine eligibility. These two amounts are added, and the **annual special education and/or related service(s) costs for an applicant student must meet or exceed three times \$10,718.94 (\$32,156.82).**
  - The student's needs must be supported by documentation located in ECATS and applicable items that may be attached to the on-line application.
- The student **meets or exceeds the minimum Risk Pool Grant Funds Rubric** score of eight (8) points.
- If the PSU received Risk Pool Program funds in 2018-2019, form RPF-2, *Risk Pool Program Grant Funds Update Form*, for each student who received funds was submitted to the Exceptional Children Division. These forms were due June 30, 2019.

**Approval** is based on the documented high cost needs of the applicant student, demonstrated by the criteria described above. All eligible applications will be ranked high to low using the individual student's rubric score. Allocations are made based on available funds, beginning with students who have the higher rubric scores.

**Student Ineligibility:** A student will be considered ineligible for RPF if any of the following apply to the student and PSU:

- Student does not meet or exceed the minimum Risk Pool Program Rubric Score of eight (8) points.
- Student does not meet or exceed three times the annual per pupil expenditure.
- Student has been funded for five (5) years.
- There is not sufficient documentation to support funding request.
- PSU has not provided documentation demonstrating that necessary interventions, resources and supports have been put in place to address the student's needs.
- Application is submitted after September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Received any of the following funds in the current school year in the current PSU:
  - Special State Reserve Funds (PRC 063)
  - Behavioral Support Funds (PRC 029)
  - Out-of-District Funds
  - Group/Foster Home Funds (PRC 060 & 032)
  - Developmental Day Funds (PRC 063)
  - Community Residential Funds (PRC 063)

**Maximum Years of Funding:** Applications are to be submitted annually. A student may be provided funding for **up to a total of five (5) years** during the student's school career in North Carolina. Although PSUs can apply for RPF for a specific student, there is no guarantee that the application will be funded each year, and funding may not be granted in consecutive years. Allocations are determined by the rubric score and the availability of funds.

**Funding requests** must consider projected and actual costs of personnel benefits, the need for substitute personnel and the student's historical attendance (frequent absences decrease costs of some services). When costs are overestimated, the number of students state-wide who benefit from grant funds decreases, resulting in students who are denied funding due to lack of funds and a high rate of reverted, unused dollars at the close of the fiscal year.

- RPF are student specific grant dollars; therefore, **personnel** whose salaries are funded with RPF can work only with the student who is named in the RPF application. The maximum period of employment for personnel salaries funded via an approved RPF application is the ten (10) calendar months for the PSU receiving the funding. Entry-level salaries noted in the current state salary schedule are to be used when requesting personnel funds. Locally provided benefits and supplements are not fundable expenditures. Policies regarding personnel also apply to contracted persons.
- **Contractor** compensation fund requests are not to exceed the portion of the contractual compensation amount for the services provided to the student named in the application.
- Special circumstances may justify costs being shared between two students if the support person is providing non-instructional duties such as toileting, feeding, etc. for both students in the same location. Each student must be eligible as an individual applicant. If the student sharing a staff member with another student withdraws from the PSU, personnel funded with RPF can no longer be supported with the withdrawn student's funds.
- Group costs or combining student's scores cannot be used as a method to satisfy RPF eligibility parameters.
- Prorating costs for school staff cannot be used in the calculation of the cost of special education services.
- RPF cannot to be used to support special educational methodologies, fund teacher positions (permanent or contracted), create new classes, provide transportation, and/or purchase consumable materials. Costs must show excess in personnel required, assistive technology and specialized equipment, etc.

**Equipment** requests must include an invoice or receipt from the vendor listing items purchased and prices. The student's PowerSchool Number will need to be on the invoice or receipt to allow DPI personnel to match it to the corresponding application. Purchase Orders and Quotes will not be accepted. The documents will need to be emailed with a naming convention (PSU#\_PSUName\_type of document) to [SpecialGrants@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:SpecialGrants@dpi.nc.gov).

An equipment request must be student specific, and it will be verified by EC Division personnel using student information available in ECATS. If additional information is needed, the PSU will be contacted. Consumable supplies are not a fundable expenditure.

Any equipment purchased for a student with RPF must accompany the student if the student transfers to another PSU in North Carolina. If the student moves out of North Carolina, the equipment remains with the PSU.

**Approval notification** will be provided via a memo to the Exceptional Children Program Director/Coordinator. The memo will state the exact amount allocated and how the allocated funds are to be spent.

- These funds are student specific and can only be used as specified in the approval memo and as described in the original application.
- **Notification of funds to be allocated** will also be sent to the School Allotment Section. Federal funds for PRC 114 will not be available until November at the earliest. The finance officer will receive an allotment revision report indicating the amount approved under PRC 114. PSUs may not spend funds from PRC 114 until the allotment revision report has been received and the PSU has an approved budget in the Budget and Amendment System (BAAS).

**Denial of Request:** All requests will be reviewed by the Exceptional Children Division. If the request is denied, the PSU will be notified via a memo to the Exceptional Children Program Director/Coordinator indicating the reason for denial.

**Amendment of Requests:** If amendments are needed in a student's original application or budget, the PSU must send a password protected email to [specialgrants@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:specialgrants@dpi.nc.gov) requesting the amendment. If there is a need to reuse or revert funds, the PSU must notify the EC Division by submitting the *Risk Pool Program Grant Funds Update Form*. The PSU will receive a notification of approval or denial of these requests.

**Withdrawals or changes in services:** The Exceptional Children Division must be notified of any change in the student's status, eligible services, or withdrawal no later than **ten (10) calendar days** after the change by submitting the *Risk Pool Program Grant Funds Update Form*. If the student has withdrawn and additional time is needed due to outstanding invoices for payment of services, an explanation can be provided in the narrative section of the form.

**Reverting Funds:** Funds are to be reverted any time during the school year when it is known that some or all funds will not be needed. When funds are reverted early, they can be reallocated to benefit a student whose application was previously denied due to lack of funds. Any unused funds must be returned by submitting the *Risk Pool Program Grant Funds Update Form*.

RPF may revert for various reasons. Several examples follow:

- The student approved for funds no longer needs the services designated on the application (e.g. student withdraws, student is placed homebound or student's day has been modified).
- The student no longer needs the level of services specified in the initial application (e.g. 1:1 no longer needed).
- The IEP Team determines the student no longer qualifies for services.
- The student had many absences and a contractor is invoiced only for days the student attend school.
- As a PSU conducts quarterly reviews of expenditures, it is realized that funds will be remaining.

**Reuse of Funds:** Unless approved by the Exceptional Children Division, funds cannot be used for another student or for a student's application that was not funded due to unavailability of funds (all funds were allocated). Request for reuse of funds for another student with an approved application on file with the EC Division may be made by submitting the *Risk Pool Program Grant Funds Update Form*. The PSU's EC Director/Coordinator will receive a notification of approval or denial for the request.

**Validation Visits:** The Exceptional Children Division may schedule a validation visit to verify the use of Risk Pool Program Grant Funds.

- PSU selection for visits may be targeted based on risk factors or RPF application requests. Selection may also be random. A visit for validation of Risk Pool Program Funds may be combined with a visit for Special State Reserve Grant Funds.
- Visits are typically scheduled to take place during 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after applications have been received and funds have been allocated.
- The PSU will provide an escort for the visiting EC Division Consultant to assist with traveling to the school(s) where the students are in attendance, checking in at school, introductions of staff, etcetera.
- The visit will include interviews with staff paid with RPF, meeting the students benefitting from the funds, seeing equipment purchased with the funds and how it is in use, and a review of each student's expenditures.
  - PSU will need to provide a copy of an official financial report showing expenditures. If it is determined that funds were not spent as per application approval and RPF parameters, PSU will receive written notification of any corrective action that will need to be taken, along with due date for submitting corrections.
  - Corrective action may include repayment of funds.
- At the conclusion of the visit, depending on time available, a brief meeting may take place to provide the EC Director /Coordinator general information about the visit.
- The PSU will receive written notification of the closure of the visit when the PSU is compliant or when the corrective action issues are resolved.

## **Reference II**

### **Fiscal Requirements for Risk Pool Program Funds**

- Risk Pool Program Grant Funds are student specific. The amount provided for the student named in the application must be used for only him/her. Without appropriate approval, funds designated for one student cannot be used for another student's expenses, even when the other student is also a recipient of Risk Pool Program Funds.
  - Funds may only be used for services described in the original application. Any amendments to the application and budget must be submitted to the EC Division via email to [specialgrants@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:specialgrants@dpi.nc.gov). The PSU will receive a notification of approval or denial of the request.
- Costs for special education and related services must be for direct services to the student named in the application. Funds cannot be used to support other students. Examples:
  - During the period of time a student is receiving related services funded via RPF, other students cannot participate in the therapy session.
  - If a personal care assistant is funded via RPF, the assistant cannot serve in the role as a classroom teaching assistant. Furthermore, the assistant cannot serve as a substitute when the student is absent unless paid from a funding source other than RPF.
- Risk Pool Program Grant Funds are not to be used to support special educational methodologies, create new classes, provide transportation, and/or purchase consumable materials. Costs must show excess in personnel required, assistive technology and specialized equipment, etc.
- These funds may not be used to contract for special education and/or related service(s) to serve the child outside the PSU.

- Risk Pool Program Funds cannot be used for reimbursement of past year's expenses.
- Indirect cost(s) cannot be charged to this program.
- The PSU must promptly establish and submit the PRC 114 Risk Pool Program Funds budget in the Budget and Amendment System (BAAS) for all approved services. Funds are not to be spent without an approved BAAS budget.
- State Exceptional Children per student child count funds (PRC 032) and Federal IDEA Part B per student child count funds (PRC 060) received by the PSU for the student will be subtracted from the approved allocation. The expectation is that these funds are to be applied toward a student's expenses prior to the grant funds.
- The *Risk Pool Program Grant Funds Update Form* is required from all PSUs receiving Risk Pool Program Grant Funds to provide a detailed update on the student's status. Failure to submit the *Risk Pool Grant Funds Update Form* may prevent the PSU's participation in Special Project Grant funding for the following year.
  - If a student's status has changed (e.g. the student is no longer enrolled or services are no longer needed), the form is to be submitted no later than ten (10) calendar days after the change.
  - For students who are enrolled through the end of the school year, the update must be submitted on or before June 30th.
- PSUs are encouraged to conduct quarterly reviews of expenditures to monitor funding balances. If it is noted there are unspent funds, these should be reverted or reused early on. When requests for reversions or reuse of funds are submitted too late in the year, other students may not be able to benefit from funds. The last day to submit updates and changes is May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
- All unused and unencumbered funds will revert on June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. Although these are federal funds, they do not carry over.

## Reference III

### Rubric for Risk Pool Program Funds Allocation

For a student to be eligible for points, services noted in the rubric are to be well documented (e.g. IEP, healthcare plan, FBA/BIP, etc.).

Rubric scores are based on an individual student's needs, not the needs of two or more students combined.

Staff members can be counted in the rubric only one time. Points are not based on a staff member's role or multiple roles but rather the primary position in which he/she is serving.

There may be rare instances when a student requires such a high need of service that two staff persons are required to access the educational program. If this is the case, the needs must be described in the narrative portion of the application and be reflected in the IEP.

Example 1: A student requires assistance for all activities of daily living, but also has some medical concerns that call for a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). The CNA is the only individual serving the student for all areas of need (medical and daily living), so the rubric score would be a three (3).

Example 2: A student requires a teacher assistant for all activities of daily living but also requires an interpreter. Two individuals are addressing the student's needs; therefore, five (5) points for the interpreter and three (3) points for the teacher assistant would be received.

**A minimum of eight (8) total points is required to be eligible for Risk Pool Program Funds.**

	Points
1. Student requires a 1:1 nurse (RN, LPN).	6
2. Student requires a 1:1 sign language interpreter, transliterator, or a deaf blind intervener.	5
3. Student requires a Brailist.	4
4. Student requires 1:1 spoken language facilitator or a personal assistant for <b>all</b> activities of daily living skills (dressing, toileting, feeding, communication, socialization, safety, etc.).	3
5. Student requires 1:1 CNA.	3
6. Student requires 1:1 personal assistant for behavior support.	2
7. Student requires two or more related services (OT, PT, SLP, O&M specialist, audiologist).	1
8. Student requires supplemental aids and/or assistive technology to access educational services.	1
9. PSU is over the 12.75% cap.	1
10. Exceptional Children Program does not receive local funds.	1
11. PSU receives Low Wealth funds or has been identified as being significantly disproportionate (mandatory 15% CEIS).	1